

Libya Will Secure Border with Tunisia

by

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This [past December](#) Tunisia closed two crossing points, Ras Jedir and Dhiba, blocking main supply routes into Tripoli and popular transit points for those traveling. The closure was in response to clashes between armed Libyans and Tunisian border guards. This of course is [not the first time](#) the Libyan-Tunisian border crossing points have witnessed violence. Libya subsequently agreed to secure her borders in December and the Deputy Prime Minister Mustafa Abu Shagur condemned the "irresponsible individuals" for their actions.

Problems have continued into January 2013. Tunisian demonstrators set tires on fire and blocked the road to the Tunisian border town of Ben Guerdane, upset by the month long closure. Around [150 million dinar](#) was lost in only ten days due to the stoppage. On January 7, 2013, two days after the protests, the Tunisian Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali [visited Libya](#) to discuss the border closing. He announced the next day that there would be a forthcoming re-opening. Irrespective of the announcement, [clashes continued](#) and only gradually did [Libyan trucks](#) begin to cross the border. Up until January 13, 2013, protests continued in [Ben Guerdane](#) and on January 14, 2012 a Tunisian man was shot down by a Libyan armed group. An investigation is to be opened but apparently Libyan authorities had not yet granted authorization to cross the border, despite the announcement of a re-opening.

As we saw in the previous month Libya has been closing many of its borders due to the unraveling security situation which, since the fall of Muammar Al-Qaddafi, has not improved. The problems in Mali, intensified by the [French intervention](#), have the risk of [spilling into the neighboring countries](#) and reaching Libya's borders. Therefore, the Tunisian border may be an easier, more realistic starting point for improving border security. However, if the violence escalates at this rate, where a trader is shot crossing the border, the future looks less optimistic. With more blood shed, animosity will grow and the weak Libyan security forces will lose what little control they have.